CrossGen

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DEC

MYSTIC™

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Giselle

never wanted ultimate power, but fate had other plans for her.

Born on a world ruled by seven magical Guilds, Giselle Villard disdained the mystic arts while her elder sister, Genevieve, rose through the ranks of the powerful Nouveau Guild. During the ceremony where Genevieve was to inherit her Guild's Eternal Spirit, a mysterious stranger branded a mark of power onto Giselle's right palm. This red and yellow Sigil forced the Eternal Spirits out of all seven Guild Masters and bound them to Giselle. Granted vast magical might, Giselle reluctantly became the most powerful Mystic ever known.

Months later, Giselle's Sigil has been stolen back by the all-powerful entity that gave it to her in the first place. Believing she has lost her power, Giselle is inconsolable. So Skitter uses his own mysterious powers to send Giselle to a prehistoric realm she visited once before. There, she met the wise Yeti and the friendly caveman, Atook. Now she must rely upon these acquaintances if she is to get past a fearsome snow dragon and find her way home...

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C'MON, YETI--MAGICK US *OUTTA* HERE!

I *CANNOT*, GISELLE! THIS LAND REMAINS *BEREFT* OF MYSTIC ENERGIES--

"--OUR DRACONIAN PURSUER IS THE *GUARDIAN* OF THE GEOMETER CURSE!"

I WAS STEALING INTO HIS LAIR, WHEN-- ⇒whulp⇐

YETI!!!!...!

GRAAHHHRRR

SNAP!

HOW MUCH DO YOU *WEIGH*?!

Wha--?!

FWEET!
NEVER MIND--EITHER THIS *WORKS*, OR I DIE FEELING *FOOLISH!*
WHAT *NOW*?!
YOU PLAN TO *CHOKE* THAT THING WITH MY BIG, FAT--
--AAAAAAAAA--

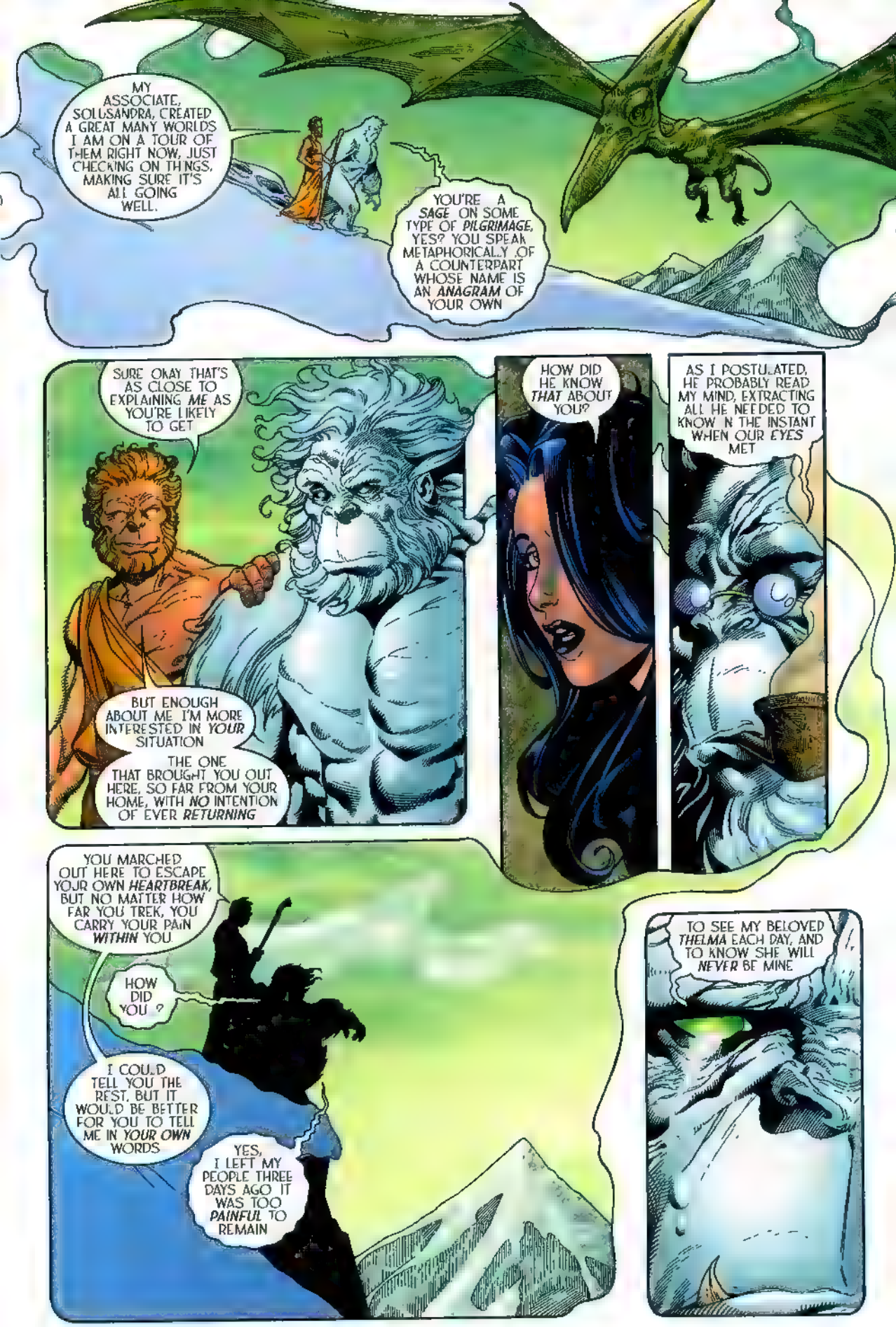
--thup--
THRAM
?
YOU DIDN'T SAY YOU'D BRING COMPANY!
IT WOULD SEEM THAT YOU ARE NOT TOO HEAVY.
IS THAT ATOOK...?!

...SO YOU GUYS ARE *STILL* STUCK WITHOUT MAGIC?
I THOUGHT WHEN I BEAT THE GEOMETER GUILD, WHATEVER THEY DID TO ROB YOUR WORLD OF ITS MYSTICAL ENERGIES WOULD, Y'KNOW...*WEAR OFF.*
UNFORTUNATELY *NOT.* I'D HOPED WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU THAT YOU HAD RETURNED TO SET THINGS RIGHT.
NOT EVEN CLOSE!
ACTUALLY, SKITTER SENT ME HERE CUZ I WAS *COMPLAINING* ABOUT LOSING THE SIGIL.
SKITTER...?
HE'S A *FRIEND* OF MINE, ATOOK. ACTUALLY, HE'S A WHOLE LOT *MORE* THAN HE APPEARS.
YETI SAYS HE WAS KNOWN AS *"ANDAR"* AROUND THESE PARTS.
MIGHTY *ANDAR* IS YOUR FRIEND?! WHY DIDN'T HE COME TO RESTORE OUR WORLD *HIMSELF?*

I THINK HE'S TRYING TO TEACH ME A LESSON.
REMEMBER THAT RED AND YELLOW THINGIE THAT USED TO BE ON MY PALM? THE SIGIL...?
IT'S WHAT MADE ME SUCH A HOT-SHOT MYSTIC IN THE FIRST PLACE. NOW IT'S GONE, AND I'M BACK TO BEING NOBODY SPECIAL.
ARE YOU CERTAIN...?
THAT IT'S GONE? SEE FOR YOURSELF!
NO. I MEAN: ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT SOME EPIDERMAL PIGMENT WAS THE SOURCE OF YOUR LEGERDEMAIN?
YOU GREW PETULANT OVER YOUR LOSS. PERHAPS "SKITTER" DISPATCHED YOU HERE TO LEARN THAT YOU STILL POSSESS THE CAPACITY TO LIBERATE OUR WORLD.
Y'KNOW, FOR A SUPER-GENIUS, YOUR OPTIMISM SEEMS KINDA NAIVE.
ALLOW ME TO RECOUNT A LITTLE TALE THAT MAY SHED SOME LIGHT ON YOUR SITUATION...

"HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, A *MULTITUDE* OF MY KIND COHABITATED PEACABLY IN THESE MOUNTAINS...
"OURS WAS A TIGHTLY-KNIT COMMUNITY, AND WHILE WE ESCHEWED *MATERIAL* ACCOMPLISHMENTS, OUR ORAL TRADITIONS, MATHEMATICS AND PHILOSOPHY REMAIN UNPARALLELED.
"WE ALSO ENJOYED A GOOD *TIRE SWING*.
"WE LIVED *ABOVE* THE TREELINE, AND ATOOK'S ANCESTORS KEPT TO THE *LOWLANDS*.
"WE VERY RARELY CROSSED PATHS, THOUGH IT WAS USUALLY *AMICABLE* IF WE DID.
"SO IT WAS RATHER UNUSUAL WHEN ONE DAY I WAS TRAVERSING CLOUDSCRAPER RIDGE AND SAW A *MAN*."

"HE HAD ORANGE EYES AND LOOKED A BIT MORE HIDEOUS THAN ATOOK'S PEOPLE.
"IN RETROSPECT, I BELIEVE HE MUST HAVE READ MY MIND, BECAUSE IN A TWINKLING, HE SUDDENLY LOOKED LIKE THE ANDAR WE ALL KNOW AND REVERE."
GREETINGS, FRIEND. YOU'RE FAR FROM HOME, AREN'T YOU?
FUNNY, BUT I WAS GOING TO SAY THE SAME OF YOU. WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?
ADMIRING THE VIEW. A FRIEND OF MINE MADE ALL THIS, YOU KNOW.
...WHAT...?
WHO ARE YOU?
I HAVE MANY NAMES. HERE, YOU MAY CALL ME ANDAR.


MY ASSOCIATE, SOLUSANDRA, CREATED A GREAT MANY WORLDS I AM ON A TOUR OF THEM RIGHT NOW, JUST CHECKING ON THINGS, MAKING SURE IT'S ALL GOING WELL.
YOU'RE A *SAGE* ON SOME TYPE OF *PILGRIMAGE*, YES? YOU SPEAK METAPHORICALLY OF A COUNTERPART WHOSE NAME IS AN *ANAGRAM* OF YOUR OWN
SURE OKAY THAT'S AS CLOSE TO EXPLAINING *ME* AS YOU'RE LIKELY TO GET
BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME I'M MORE INTERESTED IN *YOUR* SITUATION
THE ONE THAT BROUGHT YOU OUT HERE, SO FAR FROM YOUR HOME, WITH *NO* INTENTION OF EVER *RETURNING*
HOW DID HE KNOW *THAT* ABOUT YOU?
AS I POSTULATED, HE PROBABLY READ MY MIND, EXTRACTING ALL HE NEEDED TO KNOW IN THE INSTANT WHEN OUR *EYES* MET
YOU MARCHED OUT HERE TO ESCAPE YOUR OWN *HEARTBREAK*, BUT NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU TREK, YOU CARRY YOUR PAIN *WITHIN* YOU
HOW DID YOU ?
I COULD TELL YOU THE REST, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU TO TELL ME IN *YOUR OWN* WORDS
YES, I LEFT MY PEOPLE THREE DAYS AGO IT WAS TOO *PAINFUL* TO REMAIN
TO SEE MY BELOVED *THELMA* EACH DAY, AND TO KNOW SHE WILL *NEVER* BE MINE

"THELMA AND I HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE WE WERE BARELY SIX FEET TALL, AND I HAD *ALWAYS* LOVED HER
"I ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT ONE DAY SHE WOULD BE MY *MATE*
"BUT THERE WAS *ANOTHER* WHO INTENDED TO COME BETWEEN US
"HIS NAME WAS *KANCHENJUNGA*. HE WAS THE PATRIARCH, THE ALPHA MALE IN OUR TRIBE. AND HE WAS NO FRIEND OF MINE."

"OURS WAS A PEACE-LOVING, GENTLE CULTURE IN ALL BUT *ONE* MATTER..
"*MATING SEASON* THE HIERARCHY WAS STRICTLY, UNEQUIVOCABLY *ENFORCED*
"ONE HAD TO *EARN* THE RIGHT TO CLAIM ONE'S CHOSEN MATE
" AND THIS WAS THE YEAR THAT I WOULD *TOPPLE* KANCHENJUNGA FROM THE ALPHA POSITION"

"KANCHENJUNGA REALIZED THIS *TOO LATE*. HIS PRIME WAS PAST AND MINE HAD JUST *BEGUN*
POW
"HE *FLAILED* OUT AT ME DESPERATELY, BUT ONLY MANAGED TO FUEL MY *RAGE*
", SO I *ENDED* THE CHALLENGE AND HIS REIGN AS ALPHA MALE...
"I'D WAITED ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT"

"AND THEN A *STRANGE THING* HAPPENED AS I WENT TO CLAIM MY PRIZE
"SHE LOOKED AT ME AS THOUGH *CONFUSED*, AND THEN AS IF SHE DID NOT EVEN *KNOW* ME!
"IT WAS *UNPRECEDENTED* NO ONE COULD REMEMBER A FEMALE *EVER* SPURNING THE WINNER OF THE MATING CHALLENGE
"...BUT EVERYONE AGREED THAT IT *WAS* HER PREROGATIVE WE DO NOT *FORCE* OUR LOVE UPON EACH OTHER, AFTER ALL."
AND SO YOU STRUCK OUT ON YOUR OWN, *REJECTED* BY YOUR ONLY LOVE, DETERMINED NEVER TO LOOK UPON HER FACE AGAIN?
PERHAPS IF YOU'RE *LUCKY*, THE RARE AIR AND ARCTIC CHILL WILL SLOWLY *KILL* YOU.
AND FAILING *THAT*, PERHAPS YOU'LL JUST FIND SOME SECLUDED LEDGE FROM WHICH TO *HURL* YOURSELF?
YES. THAT'S IT IN A NUTSHELL.

HAHAHAHA!
?
FWASH
YETI ?
FWASH
KANCHEN JUNGA, I PRESUME ?
THAT'S RIGHT. WHO ARE YOU?
SO, YETI WHEN HE "FLAILED OUT DESPERATELY" AT YOU
DID IT LOOK LIKE THIS?

HURK
POW
HURK THELMA ?
WHAT
WHAT DID I EVER SEE IN YOU?
WHAT DID YOU ?
YOUR RIVAL KNEW HE COULD NOT DEFEAT YOU OUTRIGHT SO HE RESORTED TO A MARTIAL ARTS TRICK
HE STRUCK A CERTAIN NERVE CLUSTER THAT EFFECTIVELY SHUT OFF YOUR STINK GLAND--
--AND PHEROMONES ARE A MAJOR COMPONENT IN SEXUAL ATTRACTION AMONG YOUR KIND
BASICALLY, AS FAR AS THELMA IS CONCERNED, YOU BOTH SMELL NEUTERED

DON'T WORRY, MY FRIEND. IT'S EASY ENOUGH FOR ME TO *RECTIFY*
WHAT... WHAT'S HAPPENING...?
POP
POP
FROSH!
SNIFF SNIFF
"WITH A WORD, ANDAR HAD GIVEN ME MY *GROOVE* BACK."

BEFORE HE LEFT, I ASKED ANDAR HOW I COULD EVER *RECOMPENSE* HIM FOR THE GIFT HE HAD GIVEN ME
HE TOLD ME THAT ONE DAY, A HAIRLESS GIRL WOULD ARRIVE HERE
HE BADE ME SHARE THE *WISDOM* I GAINED THAT DAY AND THAT THIS GIRL WOULD KNOW WHAT TO *DO* WITH IT
WELL ?
WHAT W SDOM?
GIVE ME STRENGTH
I BELIEVED I'D LOST EVERYTHING, WHEN IN FACT, I STILL *HAD* THE STINK JUICE WITHIN ME!
GISELE, EACH OF US MUST FIND OUR *OWN "STINK JUICE"* IN THIS LIFE WE MUST ALL UNLEASH OUR OWN SPECIAL *MUSK*
IT COMES FROM WITHIN NOT SOMETHING PLACED *UPON* YOU
ANDAR, OR *SKITTER* AS YOU KNOW HIM, SENT YOU HERE TO *LEARN* THIS
HE KNOWS, AS I DO, THAT THE POWER TO TAP THE MYSTICAL ENERGIES STILL EXISTS WITHIN YOU
NOW HELP ME DEFEAT THE SNOW DRAGON AND *FREE* THIS LAND!

SO WHEN YOU SAY I HAVE THIS "STINK JUICE," THAT'S JUST, LIKE A FIGURE OF SPEECH, RIGHT..?
NEVER MIND THAT, GISELLE!
JUST RECOLLECT WHAT IT FELT LIKE CASTING THE BIG SPELLS.
YOUR BODY WILL REMEMBER THE SENSATION, CHANNELING AND RESHAPING THE UNIVERSAL ENERGIES
THROUGH MY STINK GLAND RIGHT ?
WHY DID I EVER EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND A PARABLE? SUBTEXT IS LOST ON YOU
GISELLE, WHAT YOUR "SKITTER" SENT YOU HERE TO LEARN
IS THAT YOUR TALENT FOR MAGIC HAS NOT GONE AWAY
THE SIGIL MAY HAVE AWAKENED YOU TO YOUR OWN INNATE ABILITIES, BUT THAT TALENT IS STILL THERE ONLY THE SYMBOL HAS GONE
NOW, FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND WE MUST GAIN INGRESS TO YON TEMPLE--THE SNOW DRAGON'S DOMICILE

W THIN IT IS THE *MECHANISM* THAT MAKES THE GEOMETER SPELL PERSIST, LONG AFTER THE SPE..CASTERS THEMSELVES .EFT THIS REA..M
STAY HERE, DAYW.NG, AND *WARN* US SHOULD YOU HEAR ANYTHING APPROACH
SQUEEK SQUEEK
SO, HOW DO WE KNOW THE DRAGON'S *NOT HOME* R.GHT NOW?
WE *DON'T*

SO THAT'S THE DOO-DAD *ARCHEMUS* LEFT HERE TO KEEP ANY MAGIC FROM WORKING IN DINOSAUR LAND, huh?
VERILY.
CAN YOU SENSE THE MAGICAL ENERGIES TRAPPED WITHIN?
Um... NOPE...
TRY NOT TO *OVER-THINK* THIS.
LET YOUR *BODY* RECALL WHAT YOUR MIND HAS FORGOTTEN.
YETI, I'VE *NEVER* BEEN ONE TO LET BRAINS GET IN THE WAY. STILL...
SKREEEE
KRUNCH
DAYWING--!
THUMP

GISELLE, NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO GET BACK YOUR MOJO...

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